

# **Motor biking rampage throughout Sighthill/ Gorgie – Graczyk says it is “unacceptable”**

## **By Cllr Ashley Graczyk Independent councillor for Sighthill/Gorgie**

In recent weeks, I have received so many emails and messages via social media, including photos and video clips, regarding off-road motorbiking rampage. All from local residents in Sighthill, Longstone, Parkhead, Broomhouse, Gorgie, Stenhouse and Saughton Prison areas. Plus, park users at Redhall Park, Sighthill Park, Hailes Quarry Park and Saughton Park.

I have contacted the Edinburgh Police Division regarding the incidents that are now happening every day in almost every part of Sighthill/Gorgie Ward. I have made it very clear to the Police that there are many angry and concerned residents contacting me, as well as on social media community groups.

Many residents are concerned about their personal safety, and for some, also their dogs, because of the intimidating behaviours by these riders, usually two or three. Some were verbally abused when the riders were confronted and even children and the elderly were being intimidated or/and distressed as the riders zoomed about doing wheelies while making an absolute racket. It is just not on.

This whole thing is utterly unacceptable, and quite frankly, more robust action from the Police is needed, including

getting these off-road motorbikes confiscated ASAP.

Back in late January/early February, I requested for high visible patrolling when Sighthill Park was experiencing fires almost every night and the Police set up Operation Pillar (#OpPillar) which is the default operation for the policing of all youth-related Anti-Social Behaviour in Edinburgh SouthWest. This also included an additional two officers. They stated,

“All of this is being policed under the banner of Operation Pillar (#OpPillar). This will be the default operation for the policing of all youth-related ASB in the SW. It’s useful for us to have an operational identity so that all the officers in CPT but also further afield recognise the brand – but also so the public will hopefully start to recognise it. I’m really keen we keep the momentum up on this.”

Thankfully, we have not had any recent fire incidents – long may this continue – but these incidents of off-road motor biking are just getting way out of hand and it has left me wondering what has happened to Operation Pillar as it should be tackling this. So, I decided to make enquiries to the Police to double check its current status.

Below is part of the Police’s response below, some information has been removed as it related to a response to specific details that I passed on to the Police which local residents had passed on to me.

“Operation Pillar is still ongoing, however we have been diverted to divisional matters for the past couple of weeks so haven’t been out as much in Sighthill Park as we were. We are, however, doing patrols of this area tonight and tomorrow.

“Off road motorcycles used in this manner are dangerous and I appreciate the concerns. I have requested some Police Off Road Bike patrols and am waiting on those being arranged. I would encourage people to call in to report this when it happens.

When we can evidence that a vehicle is driven on the road without insurance we can – and do – seize it.”

So, what this boils down to, and I know this will be immensely frustrating for many local residents, but please report any incidents to the Police – and make sure you get a reference number – so that the Community Investigation Unit (CIU) can build a clearer picture in order to identify the culprits and to build evidence.

I’m determined to do everything I can to work with the police and other local organisations to get this addressed ASAP because I’m dreading the moment someone gets hurt or even worse. Also, local residents and park users should not be expected to put up with this idiotic behaviour and be able to enjoy their local area and parks. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me with any concerns.